



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0229MI-1 for Traverse City Area Public Schools

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>

#### (A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant clearly describes the desired results and how the partnerships will track the selected indicators of success. The vision articulated by Traverse City Area Public School District (TCAPS) builds on previous successful practices at the 9-12 level in their two largest high schools. The district intends to take what it has learned and successes gained from the 5 year federally funded Smaller Learning Communities grant to scale across their K-12 landscape. This is a reasonable, wise and comprehensive approach to take to ensure successful student gains K-12 and assurance of applicability and replicability across the larger public education arena. Appendix 2 includes a visual of the applicant's vision. This comprehensive vision meets the intent and specific requirements of this section (A)(1).

The TCAPS 2011-2016 strategic plan will serve as the guiding document to accomplish the vision outlined in this section.

The applicant proposes only utilizing research based and internally validated practices. Their Smaller Learning Communities grant was built upon research based, best practices in the areas of authentic instruction, instructional rounds, advisories, professional learning plans, and critical friends groups. These are the tried and true practices the applicant proposes to take to scale K-12 with this grant. This approach will result in a higher likelihood of project sustainability at the end of the grant period. This approach also assures that the grant funds are being invested in those innovations that are more likely to be successful when brought to scale district wide.

The applicant has identified critical areas for additional focus including special education and economically disadvantaged sub populations targeting the achievement gaps in reading and math K-8. Again, the applicant is proposing remedying these gaps by building upon their high school successes of providing special education teachers who taught as co-teachers in the content areas. Taking this to the next step through the grant, the applicant envisions training all special education teachers K-12 in a content area to increase and focus their areas of expertise above accommodating student learning needs. This is a proven strategy within their high school student population, and a promising practice that could be considered as part of the national dialog around new promising practices.

The present grant brought high school teachers together twice a month to engage in critical discussions around student work. The applicant proposes to enhance this by implementing instructional rounds K-12 focused on the instructional core. Another significant and proven national education innovation that the applicant proposes to take to scale is to employ instructional leader coaches released to work with teachers and students. What exceeds common practices is the applicants proposal to hire these coaches at the ratio of 1 coach for every 500 students. They also propose adding content area leader coaches for each content area. The work of both types of coaches will be to translate student data into just in time supports for students, again a realistic and potentially powerful approach to accelerating student academic growth and success.

The applicant described how they have met the eligibility requirements involving implementing a substantial student learning focused teacher and administrator evaluation system as evidenced in Appendix 3 and 4. These extensively detailed instruments are in place and being implemented in the district. The grant would allow the applicant to better train educators and administrators in using the instruments to refine their practice and ensure the instruments are having the intended effect on student growth.

With the past five year Student Learning Communities grant, the district has a proven track record of more students attaining advanced placement classes and enrolling in college as a result of such interventions as: implementing flexible learning times, online and blended learning environments, seat time waivers, grade level teaming, common planning periods, advisory period, Personal Learning Plans completed by all students, and student led conferences. Students developed individual learning goals that targeted post secondary plans, 21st century learning skills and career and college readiness standards as well as graduation standards. Building upon these learning goals, the applicant plans to intentionally infuse "habits of mind" characteristics in their teaching practices K-12. So although the applicant is not in a State that has officially adopted career and college standards, they have introduced these and incorporated them into their high school student planning protocol.

The above evidence validates and elaborates upon the comprehensive, sound and realizable vision proposed in this section by TCAPS and its ability to meet the eligibility requirements and assurances outlined in this grant. For these reasons, all points in this section are awarded to the applicant.

<b>(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
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**(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant has met the requirements in this section. All students and staff in TCAPS are participating in and benefiting from this grant. 10,000 students, 40.4% who qualify for free and reduced lunch and are considered high needs, 32 principals, 567 teachers, and 618 support staff will participate in this grant. Tables are provided that validate the participating student demographics. This section receives full points and has met all requirements of this section.

<b>(A)(3) LEA-wide reform &amp; change (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
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**(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant included a logic model in Appendix 5 to facilitate understanding of this proposed vision. The applicant will take instructional rounds to scale across the district as their vehicle for continually refining instruction and practices, pairing observation data with assessment data to drive continuous instructional improvement. Presently, 60 staff members are trained and 7 sites have participated in rounds. The applicant is realistic about what this reform and change model will take to fully implement across the district and has a proven track record of successful implementation on a smaller scale. The applicant presents a high quality plan, already successfully being implemented and grounded in research and best practices, to ensure and maximize their chances of successfully improving student learning in TCAPS. This sound evidence awards full points to the applicant in this section.

<b>(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
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**(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant provided thorough documentation of present and predicted performance on assessments required to measure all of the performance goals required in this section including secondary degree attainment. Growth targets are rigorous yet realistic. The assessment tools are comprehensive and measure discrete areas including college reading readiness. The provided charts are comprehensive and readable. The applicant exceeds state required participating on the EXPLORE/PLAN test, which is given voluntarily to students statewide but which TCAPS tests all students on including special education students. Due to the quality of the evidence provided by the applicant in this section, full points are awarded.

**B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)**

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>

**(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant outlines and documents a clear and impressive record of success over the past four years in advancing student learning, increasing innovative curriculum offerings such as Montessori and STEM, closing achievement gaps and exceeding statewide performance in reading, math (including economically disadvantaged), and ACT composite scores. They have exceeded the nation by outperforming in reading, English and Science in Grades 8 and 9 and in all subjects in grade 10. The graduation rate is well above the state average including the sub-populations of special education and economically disadvantaged students. Those two populations have seen significant increases in college going rates as well. This data is documented in Appendix B1, their annual progress report compiled by Michigan State University, and B9, the final evaluation report for the Smaller Communities grant. Appendix B2 contains the ACT trend charts. Appendix B3 and 4 their academic assessment results (MEAP). B5, 6, 7 and 8 documents their EXPLORE/PLAN and college enrollment and graduation rates. Guided by a mutually agreed upon strategic plan.

The district has demonstrated that they have made significant progress in their persistently low performing Title I schools who were awarded Michigan's "Beating the Odds" award, an award given to schools who are outperforming others in the state with similar risk factors and demographic composition.

Component (c) making student performance data available to students, educators and parents was partially addressed by the applicant. Evidence was provided that at the high school level, student led conferences and Personal Learning Plan development by each high school student are resulting in improved instruction, participation and services. Common planning times have been implemented for teachers who share common students to discuss and plan to more effectively meet their students' learning needs. The applicant indicated that receiving the grant funds would allow them to "align their present innovations, as we anticipate parents and students might wish to continue the same kind of programming..but with multiple entry points."

The applicant did not provide specifics or evidence of how they will use student performance data to inform parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction and services as required in (B)(c) of this section. The applicant did however thoroughly present their case for meeting components (a) and (b) of this section. This section was scored in the lower high range of possible points to acknowledge the omission but recognize the high quality of the applicant's response to the remainder of the section.

**(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)****5****4****(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant lists and provides evidence in Appendices 11 through 17, that personnel salaries for administrators and teachers are posted on the district website by category and pay scale, which they state exceeds all of the state of Michigan's requirements for transparency. Union contracts, negotiated proposals are posted on the district website. Monthly accounts payable, and ten years of annual historical finance data are also posted at the district website. Board of Education Finance meetings are broadcast live and available as live-feed on the district's website. Although the applicant provided sound evidence of meeting high levels of transparency in LEA processes, practices and investments, they failed to provide evidence of how school level support staff personnel salaries are made available to the public. This omission resulted in this section being scored in the lower high range.

**(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)****10****10****(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

TCAPS included numerous examples of having the successful conditions and state autonomy to implement the personalized learning environments described in this proposal.

Successfully receiving and implementing a five year US Department of Education grant, the Smaller Communities Grant, is a strong indication and vote of confidence that TCAPS is successful in attracting and benefiting from federal education grants. Additionally, receipt of this federal grant and the documents included in this application outlining their annual report and end of grant evaluation reports, would indicate that TCAPS is well poised to successfully use this current proposed Race to the Top grant to take the previous successful practices to scale.

State autonomy and flexibility is evident in a number of ways. TCAPS has taken the state adopted Common Core State Standards requirement a step further by piloting a curriculum mapping software. TCAPS applies for and receives curriculum and seat time waivers so that the district can better meet students needs.

At the local district level, the Master Agreement for the Traverse City Educators Association included sufficient and meaningful blocks of time as part of the negotiated agreement, to ensure successful implementation of the Critical Friends Group model of professional learning communities. The collaboratively developed teacher and administrator evaluation system that grew out of the instructional rounds process piloted at the high school over the past five years is further evidence that TCAPS has created successful local conditions to bring about the personalized learning environments proposed in this application. The high school teachers traded a staff meeting day for an additional critical Friends group day, as further evidence of the local conditions being favorable to supporting the outcomes expected from this grant.

Lastly, TCAPS stated that their Board policy supports this reform direction and the long range strategic plan implemented in 2011. It is apparent from the evidence provided that TCAPS has a proven track record within the federal education grant arena, utilized state waivers and flexibility to benefit student outcomes, and has multiple of examples of the conditions being in place at the local level assuring successful implementation of this grant proposal. With this strong evidence, this section has earned full points.

**(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)**

**10**

**4**

**(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant provided an in depth outline of stakeholder involvement in the recent Strategic Planning process. They stated that a similar process was used to engage stakeholders in the development of this application. Insufficient evidence was provided to support this claim.

The district strategic planning process, completed recently in 2011, is evidence of ongoing stakeholder involvement and the the district typically does their business, not just a one time activity for the purpose of obtaining this grant. The results of the data gathering stage of the strategic plan development is included in Appendix 19. These extensive survey results formed the basis for the present strategic plan. Appendix 20 and 21 include in a variety of survey vehicles and results including the results of telephone survey. Additionally, the surveys were differentiated by respondent such that the staff/employee survey results and themes were correlated with the parents, and community survey responses and themes. Community, parent staff and student focus groups provided additional data to verify or affirm the developing themes.

Building on this extensive strategic planning process and impressive data collection already gathered, TCAPS had all teachers and administrators participate in the TCAP Personalizing Education Inventory. These survey results were shared with the District Leadership Team and each school building. The survey results were embedded in the existing site level strategic plans and are the basis for and validation for the Race to the Top application.

No evidence was provided to indicate that parents, community members, students and the union were enlisted as part of this grant development process.

The strategic planning process was recently conducted and the plan implemented district wide following an exhaustive stakeholder involvement process. The strategic plan vision is closely aligned with and complimentary of the vision and goals of this grant application. The union president signature was part of the required assurance pages. The omission of documentation supporting multiple stakeholder involvement in the development this particular grant application is concerning. The success of this grant is dependent on the support of the specific stakeholders who will be implementing and/or benefiting from this expenditure of funds and program implementation. Without clear evidence of stakeholder involvement, component (a) of this section is not met.

Letters of support were documented in Appendix 22 and included evidence of national government agency support (Congress and US Senators), state agency support (Michigan's deputy superintendent). Local support was documented (Mayor, Chamber of Commerce). Michigan's Department of Education convened a review committee and provided specific recommendations which are included in the Appendices, that were then incorporated into this grant proposal and a letter of support is included from the State Deputy Superintendent. Of particular note are the letter of support from the Tribal Chairman of the Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians. Component (b) of this section was partially met but did not

include evidence of parent and student support. The omissions from components (a) and (b) of this section are significant oversights. This section is rated in the low medium range as a result.

<b>(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
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**(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant wisely referenced the unmet objectives and targets from the end of project assessment of the Smaller Learning Community grant as the springboard for the needs and gaps they will address in this grant. The applicant listed gaps in math and reading achievement in sub populations of special education and economically disadvantaged that they intend to address. Increasing academic performance and the graduation rate for the high school students attending the alternative school program were defined as needs to be aggressively addressed through this grant. lastly, the applicant listed additional focus areas based on some of the successful practices they intend to take district wide. The applicant also provided a Race to the Top detailed and realistic implementation plan in Appendix C1 outlining the detailed sequence of steps that will enable the applicant to meet the goals identified in this grant. The applicant included evidence and analysis to support their selected needs and gaps. They provided the logic model upon which this reform proposal is built. They included a detailed strategic plan to ensure accomplishing the high quality plan they have outlined in this grant proposal. This clear evidence supported the full awarding of points for this section.

### C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>

**(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant has built their comprehensive vision for this grant on the successful implementation and lessons learned from implementing the successful five year federal Smaller Learning Community grant at both high schools. They are expanding and bringing to scale already successful practices by tailoring them to the developmental, social and learning needs of the K-8 student population. the applicant provided detailed evidence and tables of the high quality mechanisms they have or plan to have in place over the life of the grant.

The two high schools have developed successful continuous learning structures and sustained personalized learning environments for their students as explained in previous sections of this application. Building on these successes and enhancing this proposal through additional grant supports (Connected math pilot, Instructional Rounds, Artful Thinking and the secondary school global partnership with China through Michigan State University) TCAPS is aligning multiple efforts to provide engaged and empowered learning experiences for all students K-12. (C)(1)(a)Evidence for this subsection is documented in the detailed Race to the Top plan and table that is provided in this section.

Above and beyond the numerous strategies outlined in their plan, the applicant highlights some high quality additions: expanding opportunities for students to have access to deep learning opportunities at present is limited. They will establish required student designed capstone projects for grades 5, 8 and 12.

To better connect their students to the larger world and the global society, the applicant is adding virtual foreign exchange experiences leveraging distance learning technology to build on the existing elementary International Baccalaureate and the Chinese immersion programs. Additionally, they are including foreign language instruction at all levels K-12.

The applicant proposes building on the successful personalized learning environments in place at the high school and expanding to support students K-12. This would include building flexible pathways and schedules at every level for parents and students to match with the students interests and abilities. Electronic portfolios will become the anchor documents for personalizing these pathways for students. Systems will be created to allow students to self-monitor their progress and to match remediation and acceleration options accordingly. This will also include expansion of the performance based and authentic assessments already being implemented at the high schools and incorporated in the curriculum mapping software being piloted K-12. The applicant hopes that these personalized scaffolded supports will translate into all students being career and college ready and graduating on time and prepared.

The applicant acknowledges that importance of acceleration in addition to remediation, providing avenues for AP courses, higher level math courses, and world language courses as examples of possible enriched offerings.

One to one ratio for technology is already in place in the high schools. This will be expanded K-12 with additional professional development supports for teachers through the Michigan Association of Computer and Technology Users.

Parents already have access to online grade books. The applicant envisions greatly expanding this resource by making Personal Learning Plans and performance based reports cards also part of the online grade book suite. this vehicle will also assist in the applicants strategies for reducing absentee and discipline rates while increasing students growth rates in the at risk populations. Enhancing literacy coaches and having systematic focused roundtables to discuss the progress of these students is also being built in to there plan. (C)(1)(b) Evidence for this subsection is documented in the detailed Race to the Top plan and table that is provided in this section.

The applicant lays out a plan to increase student facility and access to tools and resources that allow them to track their own learning. From digital portfolios, older elementary students as mentors to younger students, advisories at the ms and hs levels, to vehicles for electronic counting of student and parent frequency of access to these tools and data, the applicant has identified reasonable mechanisms to allow for student ownership, access and monitoring of their learning outcomes. Student led conferences, advisories, Personal Learning Plans and goal setting, are successfully implemented at the high schools and will be modified to be delivered K-12, ensuring all students and their parents, understand what they are learning, are provided opportunities to design personalized environments that enable them to master critical content and skills, including college and career standards and 21st century skills. (C)(1)(c) Evidence for this subsection is documented in the detailed Race to the Top plan and table that is provided in this section.

The applicant has devoted in depth attention and critical detail in describing the learning mechanisms required in this section. The mechanisms are research based, realistic, important and highly likely to being about the results the applicant is seeking. The detail and high quality warrant a full allotment of points for this section.

<b>(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>
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**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The high quality plan envisioned by the applicant, TCAPS, will not be successful without equal attention to building the leadership capacity of staff and administrators. The applicant has provided thoughtful, realistic and important strategies for insuring capacity building with the first year focused on ensuring all teachers understand college and career readiness standards at all grade levels.

Personalized school choice, academy enrollment, and school within-a-school programs are the launching point for personalizing student learning environments at all levels and for all students. Expansion of dual enrollment, testing out of courses, blended instruction, seat time waivers, accelerated graduation options, project- based formative and summative assessments will now be rethought and applied at the lower levels to ensure equal access and flexibility to learning personalization.

The applicant posits that much higher quality data will now be incorporated into the existing data landscape through the Instructional Rounds observations and analysis. They propose moving away from the numerous standardized and summative assessments they now have in place to incorporate more authentic and embedded performance assessments. This again will require building the capacity and understanding of both teachers and students. Instructional rounds will facilitate the building of authentic assessments; these assessments will in turn compliment the teacher and administrator evaluation system that requires evidence of individual student growth comprising 50% of the final teacher or administrator evaluation by the 2015-2016 school year. Teachers will participate in job specific learning communities to build understanding and delivery of authentic instruction that is then assessed through the new teacher and administrator evaluation tools. This continuum further builds on student perception surveys and school climate surveys which are directly

part of the data collected in teacher and administrator evaluations. This is indeed ambitious, doable and necessary if TCAPS is to ensure that all students are taught by highly competent teachers.

The applicant details the mechanisms in place or to be added to ensure teaching and leading supports their overall vision of increased individualized learning environments for all K-12 students. The mechanisms detailed are either already being implemented and will be taken to scale or are logical extensions of innovations already in place. These mechanisms are well thought out, accurately described and documented in this section, resulting in a full award of points.

#### D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b> <p>The applicant describes their district as systematically reframing central office services to support school based leadership and decision making over the past years. They propose restoring leadership positions that have been lost to budget cuts, namely adding a Director of improvement/Research/ Evaluation and content area instructional leaders. School leadership teams have autonomy over distribution of resources, staffing-including non-instructional support, professional development, school structure including whole school restructuring as was the case for the Montessori schools and International Baccalaureate and Chinese immersion programs.</p> <p>As described earlier in the application and reviewed in this section, seat time waivers, test out options, credit recovery, dual enrollment, and blended classes allow students to earn credit in multiple ways. Performance based assessments, accelerated learning as well as the options listed above also ensure students can demonstrate mastery in multiple ways and over time. Online courses, curriculum, digital resources, translation services are examples of the rich adaptable learning resources students and teachers will have increasing access to through the grant.</p> <p>The applicant continues to thoroughly document the LEA practices, policies and autonomy in place and necessary for the full and successful implementation of this learning plan. This section receives full points successfully meeting the required components of this section.</p>		
<b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b> <p>The applicant offers a variety of avenues to ensure parent and student data access and technical support. Of particular note, all high school students have laptops to ensure universal access to learning and resources. Equally impressive, beginning in 2013-2014, this program will expand to include the middle and elementary schools. Free internet access is available in all school libraries and elementary schools will have extended hours to allow additional internet access after hours. The district will continue to invest in high quality digital content in all content areas beyond the life of the grant. Online tutorial sites, a student technician program, help desk, continual updating video and written tutorials available for self service are evidence of the many technical supports available for students, parents and staff. Technical staff will be maintained and expanded as necessary. Of note, the student technician program grows the technical expertise within the student body ensuring future sustainability and introduction to meaningful career pathways.</p> <p>Parents and students already have access to Google Docs, and Pinnacle Internet Viewer so that all grades, transcripts, attendance and assignments are electronically accessible. All TCAPS data systems allow for interoperability. Again, the components of this section are fully met and of high quality in the applicants narrative. This section earns full points.</p>		



**E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b> <p>The applicant submitted a high quality logic model and strategic plan in Appendices A1 and A5 that meet the requirements of this section. Additionally, the applicant has continually referenced and built upon the logic model and strategic plan in addressing each section of this application.</p> <p>The District School Improvement Team is the primary driver of continuous improvement utilizing instructional rounds to identify problems of practice and meeting monthly to strategize and implement. In turn, each school has a school leadership team that also drives continuous improvement at the school level through instructional rounds. Bi-weekly principal meetings, weekly staff meetings and student leadership groups at each school help to coordinate and calibrate continuous school improvement. The grant proposes creating a Continuous Improvement Leadership Team to oversee all the moving parts as described above. This team will drive a comprehensive evaluation model as described in the theory of action.</p> <p>Multiple methods for communication and engagement of stakeholders was described by the applicant. Investments will be monitored and reported on by the District School improvement Team, the Directors of Professional Development. Costs and effectiveness will be tied directly to the logic model. The applicant has a proven track record of accountability for results and monitoring, measuring and sharing publicly information on the quality of its investments as is the case in the Community of Learning grant and the end of grant reports provided as evidence. This track record and the evidence provided in this section are assurance of the rigor and feasibility of the continuous improvement plan the applicant intends to deliver, and this section earns the full points.</p>		
<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b> <p>The applicant outlines multiple communication vehicles including televised Board meetings, electronic and print newsletters, internet and social media sites. the District Advisory Council consists of parents from each school and will be one of the vehicles the applicant will use to keep stakeholders informed of grant progress and developments. Community members also contribute their voices through civic group attendance such as the Chamber of Commerce and Rotary. Students actively communicate through student led broadcasts, newspapers and publications. The Continuous Improvement Team will be responsible for annual performance reports, data collection and final findings. The applicant demonstrates the capacity to meet the components of this section to ensure communication and engagement are ongoing and receives full points.</p>		
<b>(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b> <p>The applicant met all of the performance measure requirements in this section. The applicant included some novel measures. Absence percentage rate will provide evidence of project success through improved attendance and will be continually monitored. An aerobic fitness test score was selected to meet the grade K-3 social emotional measure. Health/Nutrition, Health/Social Emotional, and Health/Drug assessments in grades 9-11 will assess social emotional factors. Additionally the Coalition for Essential Schools Asset survey are the social emotional measures proposed for 4-8 grades. Explore will measure 4-8 grade students' capacity to meet college benchmarks. Explore, Plan, ACT and the Michigan Merit Exam will measure 9-12 grade students' capacity to meet college benchmarks. It is clear from the applicants response and accompanying tables that high quality and varied student performance measures have been identified with realistic and ambitious targets. Full points are awarded to the applicant for this section.</p>		
<b>(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>



**(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

RTT-D funding will allow the applicant to rapidly scale up and disseminate effective practices already in place in the two high schools. Funding will enable intense support and development. The District School Leadership Team, the Improvement/Research/evaluation director and the Professional Development Directors will all share responsibility for assuring efficacy, providing access to resources and data to ensure effective use of resources is continually assured. Continuous improvement practices such as the Instructional Rounds and Critical Friends Groups will also provide these leadership groups with information on possible waste or need for targeted resource. The effects of and satisfaction with Professional development will be measured. All investments will be measured against the Logic Model and Strategic Plan. It is important to note that the applicant has a proven track record of effectively and efficiently utilizing significant federal funds to realize comprehensive and significant improvement in student achievement at the high school level. Final reports and annual audits provided in the application are evidence of the applicants track record. The applicant provided a reasonable and doable strategy for meeting this sections' requirements and provides a proven track record, earning full points for this section.

**F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b> <p>The budget provides funding for effective research based and targeted professional development to improve the quality of all instructional staff. The budget also includes significant time for comprehensive and continual improvement. After the Smaller Learning Communities grant funds ended, both high schools found ways to continue with the innovations by creative use of and prioritization of existing resources. Structuring smaller learning communities around the work of instructional rounds will become the embedded way of doing business at TCAPS and will ensure sustainability of this continuous improvement model. The grant will provide additional time for designing personalized learning plans for all students and across all levels. Critical Friend Groups and Instructional rounds are already sustainable at the high schools and the applicant intends to make this the case K-12 at the completion of the grant. The District School Improvement Team will work with an external evaluator to increase their facility with data usage to guide decision making and continuous improvement. The District School Improvement Team will continue to be in place and functioning after the conclusion of the grant.</p> <p>The applicant provided a detailed budget narrative and rational. Costs and expenditures adequately support the strategic plan and vision of this application. Budget expenditures are focused primarily on building structures and competence to ensure continuance of comprehensive efforts after the grant funds end.</p> <p>The applicant would leverage RTT-D funds with other funding sources such as Carl Perkins, Elementary and Secondary Education Act,, Upward Bound Program and Title II funds to ensure cohesive planning and assuring sustainability after the RTT-D funds end. An outside evaluator is part of the budget allocation to ensure high quality accounting for the grant expenditures and assurance the investments resulted in significant student outcomes. All funds are one time investments.</p> <p>The Early Childhood budget and staffing were not previously introduced in the application to this point. The budget supports a part time Director, assistant, preschool manager and assistants. The expenditures are sound but the applicant did not build the case for these positions and services in the previous application narrative. Although this section addressed all the components of this section, it received a lower high score due to omitting a clear, in depth description of the Early Childhood plan in previous narratives.</p>		
<b>(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b> <p>The budget provides funding for research based and targeted professional development to improve the quality of all instructional staff. The budget also includes significant time for comprehensive and continual improvement. After the Smaller Learning Communities grant funds ended, both high schools found ways to continue with the innovations by</p>		

creative use of and prioritization of existing resources. Structuring smaller learning communities around the work of instructional rounds will become the embedded way of doing business at TCAPS. The grant will provide additional time for designing personalized learning plans for all students and across all levels. Critical Friend Groups and Instructional rounds are already sustainable at the high schools and the applicant intends to make this the case K-12 at the completion of the grant. The District School Improvement Team will work with an external evaluator to increase their facility with data usage to guide decision making and continuous improvement. The District School Improvement Team will continue to be in place and functioning after the conclusion of the grant. All of these budget components were specifically designed to support the comprehensive project goals building staff capacity to enable long term sustainability at the end of the grant term. The applicant has demonstrated success using this same approach to sustainability with the previous Smaller Learning Communities federal grant. The applicant provided evidence assuring the feasibility sustainability after the grant funds end and received full points for this section.

The applicant is not utilizing any additional outside funds to sustain this part of the project once the grant ends. The competitive Priority Project, however, does build upon a variety of present funding sources that will continue to be used to ensure sustainability. These federal government financial sources include Carl Perkins, Upward Bound, Title II and ESEA funds as required in this section.

### Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>

#### Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant chose early childhood as their area of competitive preference. This is a realistic and important selection to provide a continuum of education services pre K through 12. This preference is aligned with and compliments the comprehensive K-12 strategic plan included in this application. TAPS already leverages services through community partnerships with Head Start, Traverse Bay Intermediate School District and the Early Childhood Investment Corporation. These community partners band together to provide seamless services for children two and a half to five years of age. Head Start and Great Start Readiness Programs receive state funds. These programs are housed in the existing elementary schools and high risk students are identified for inclusion in this programs. TCAPS currently has waiting lists for these programs. A tuition based preschool program is provided but the district does not have the resources to adequately serve all students in need. The goal of addressing this competitive preference is for the district to assure all children entering Kindergarten enter kindergarten-ready. This is an important priority that effects the later outcomes of all students in the system, K-12.

The applicant outlines a comprehensive approach to providing early childhood services with research based components. The applicant envisions universal access to preschools for all families. They also envision significant program goals including a decrease in the number of students entering kindergarten with unidentified support services needs. In order to deliver on these goals, they have included additional supports such as home visitations, parent groups, parent-child play groups, parent group meetings, referrals for early intervention services, parent education, quality care and effective and quality preschool experiences for all children. The partners will periodically catalog and inventory assets to ensure better coordination.

TCAPS staff will track kindergarten success, continue home visitations through kindergarten, and provide individual transition plans for students promoted to first grade. Early Childhood Professional Learning Communities will be established consisting of the partners to monitor, collect data, develop action plans and monitor school improvement efforts. The partners will also utilize their staffs and professional development to increase the capacity of TCAPS staff.

Within the early childhood programs, Professional Learning Communities will be implemented along the lines of the Education Rounds incorporated K-12. High quality early childhood assessments were identified to monitor student success. The applicant included a detailed table of population level desired results, realistic and challenging performance measures.

The applicant met and exceeded all of the components of this section and received full points.

**Absolute Priority 1**

	Available	Score
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>	<b>Met/Not Met</b>	<b>Met</b>
<b>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</b> <p>The applicant thoroughly addressed and consistently met all of the selection criteria specified in Absolute Priority 1 throughout this grant application.</p> <p>The vision articulated by Traverse City Area Public School District (TCAPS) builds on previous successful practices at the 9-12 level in their two largest high schools. The district intends to take what it has learned and successes gained from the 5 year federally funded Smaller Learning Communities grant to scale across their K-12 landscape. This is a reasonable, wise and comprehensive approach to take to ensure successful student gains K-12 and assurance of applicability and replicability across the larger public education arena. Appendix 2 includes a visual of the applicant's vision. This comprehensive vision meets the intent and specific requirements of this grant in all regards.</p> <p>The comprehensive and well thought out TCAPS 2011-2016 strategic plan will serve as the guiding document to accomplish the vision outlined in this section.</p> <p>The applicant proposes only utilizing research based and internally validated practices. Their Smaller Learning Communities grant was built upon research based, best practices in the areas of authentic instruction, instructional rounds, advisories, professional learning plans, and critical friends groups. These are the tried and true practices the applicant proposes to take to scale K-12 with this grant. This approach will result in a higher likelihood of project sustainability at the end of the grant period. This approach also assures that the grant funds are being invested in those innovations that are more likely to be successful when brought to scale district wide.</p> <p>TCAPS has designed a high quality plan for building on previous successes, provided documentation and a previous track record assuring their ability to deliver on this ambitious plan. The applicant has set a reasonable budget and sustainability plan to ensure the district continues to implement these innovations long after the grant funds end. The applicant has also provided a realistic plan that other education entities could duplicate, take to scale. TCAPS has designed a plan that meets and exceeds the Race to the Top requirements and promises to contribute meaningful research to the field of public education innovation.</p>		

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>199</b>
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**Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)**

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	15
<b>Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:</b> <p>The applicant included a supplemental program that will greatly enhance their teachers ability to provide authentic learning experiences fro their students K-12. In addition, the applicant has included another school district, Sutton Bay, to partner in this endeavor. Both districts have collaborated previously so this is not a new partnership. Both districts would grow their own Authentic Intellectual Work trainers to work with staff as coaches. The two districts will train together and share resources and expertise. The goal is to embed these practices into all district processes. The applicant will use two robust measures associated with this project, the Classroom Implementation Profile and a correlational comparison of teacher tasks and student work. There is high likelihood this supplemental project will result in better prepared learners for he 21st century and meeting and exceeding the career and work ready standards. The accompanying budget is reasonable and</p>		

supportable and will impact the quality and rigor of learning provided by the teachers in two separate school district's. The applicant presents a reasonable and innovative use of supplemental funds and receives full points for this section.

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

15

10

**Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant proposes an innovative grant for building STEM interest in three elementary schools across three school districts. The applicant outlines the many successes experienced by students attending the STEM high school programs. Two surveys support increased interest on the part of students in STEM careers as a result of the involvement of students in these STEM programs and their participating in state and national robotics competitions. The publicity has directly increased the amount of student interest in these offerings. The proposal includes a reasonable budget and is worth investing in to see if this innovative approach to involving elementary students in STEM curriculum through LEGO competitions can spark future STEM career pursuits.

The budget is reasonable though a full time director over the four years of the project does not seem necessary. The applicant does state that plans for sustainability are included in the project goals those these plans are not elaborated.

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

15

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**Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant proposes hiring four curriculum specialists to work with an existing Learning Management System and further develop it by critiquing teacher developed content, searching for free open source educational materials, developing additional digital content, monitoring usage of the Learning Management System by educators across two school districts. The budget pays for the employment of these four positions over the four years of the grant. With the plethora of digital content available and the numerous commercial Instructional Management Systems that are pre-populated as well as customizable, this is not a reasonable use of the grant funds nor does it add significantly to the priorities included in this grant.



## Race to the Top - District

### Technical Review Form

Application #0229MI-2 for Traverse City Area Public Schools

**A. Vision (40 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>

**(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant addresses four core educational assurance areas: implementing college and career readiness standards and assessments, utilizing data systems to improve instruction, creating and supporting great teachers and leaders, and turning around the lowest achieving schools.

The applicant proposes a comprehensive program to be implemented in two large high schools, one alternative high school, two middle schools, an off campus education program for students who are expelled, and 14 elementary schools including two Montessori programs and an International Baccalaureate School candidate for Primary grades. The program is based on research based strategies.

Accelerating student achievement will be achieved through identification of students who need interventions in specific concepts and content areas. Interventions include academic assistance during and beyond the school day, "double dipping" of classes in the areas of math and English, utilization of E2020, and assessment preparation. A pyramid of interventions will be customized for each student K-12 which will include literacy specialists, Reading Recovery, math tutoring labs. By addressing math and reading, student achievement in all areas should improve.

Habits and skills correlated with success will be taught in grades K-12 in a variety of settings and contexts.

Areas most in need of improvement include special education and economically disadvantaged sub-populations. Student performance will be improved through a co-teaching relationship between the classroom teacher and the special education teacher.

Deepening student learning will be addressed through the PLPs developed by each student. Each student will develop vertically aligned learning goals. This will help students gain more meaning from their learning and help them see the big picture of the importance and relevance of their education,

Relevant learning experiences will occur within the community through community collaborations and partnerships.

The applicant proposes increasing equity through personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests through the use of Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs) in which all students will be engaged in a rigorous course of study.

Teaching will be improved through the implementation of authentic instruction throughout the district in grades preK-12.

Teachers will have Content Area Leader-Coaches to help them collaborate and determine best practices in the instruction of Common Core Standards to help students become more college and career ready.

This applicant receives full points for thoroughly describing the reform vision and addressing all elements of this criterion.

<b>(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
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**(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant states that all schools will participate so that all students will be able to benefit from the proposed program.

Approximately 10,000 students will participate in the proposed program. Of those, 40.4% qualify for free or reduced lunch and are considered high-needs or at-risk. Personnel participating will include 32 principals, 567 teachers, and 618 support staff personnel. A table showing the breakdown of participants by school is included in the application.

This applicant receives full points for thoroughly describing their approach to implementation by addressing all elements of this criterion.

<b>(A)(3) LEA-wide reform &amp; change (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>
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**(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant included a logic model in the appendices to depict the vision of the proposed program. However, this logic model does not provide enough information to be considered a high-quality plan showing how the program will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform.

The applicant indicates that the program will be expanded district-wide and will build upon previous successes in student learning and teacher effectiveness, but the applicant does not provide adequate detail regarding goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, or responsible parties to describe how this program will be successfully and systematically expanded district-wide and will help the applicant reach its outcome goals.

Because the logic model does provide some information about the proposed program, it is determined that this application minimally addresses the elements of this criterion.

<b>(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
<p><b>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant sets annual goals for student performance on summative assessments. The applicant sets goals for improved student learning and performance on multiple grade appropriate measures. Students are expected to show improved performance as a whole as well as in the identified subgroups - economically disadvantaged and special education.</p> <p>The applicant sets annual goals for decreasing achievement gaps. The annual targets set for identified subgroups of students are the same. This shows the expectation that the proposed program will decrease the achievement gap.</p> <p>Annual targets for graduation rates are included in the application. The applicant included a table showing the graduation rates for the overall population as well as the identified subgroups - economically disadvantaged and special education. The goals set show improvement each year that the program is in place. The established goals are set so that the end result is a decrease in the achievement gap between the overall group and the identified subgroups.</p> <p>The applicant included a table showing the college enrollment rates for the overall population as well as the identified subgroups. The goals set show improvement each year that the program is in place. The established goals are set so that the end result is a decrease in the gap in college enrollment between the overall group and the identified subgroups.</p> <p>The applicant included a table showing the postsecondary degree attainment. The data provided indicates the number of TCAPS students attaining a college degree during each identified school year as well as projections for future school years.</p> <p>While all of the indicated criteria are addressed, the applicant does not provide information regarding the annual goals that are State ESEA targets for the LEAs, overall and by student subgroup. Without knowing the state targets, it is difficult to determine if the annual goals are ambitious or achievable. Because this element is lacking, it is determined that the applicant moderately addresses this set of criteria.</p>		

## B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant completed a SLC grant which resulted in the achievement of many grant milestones and benchmarks that improved student learning outcomes and closed achievement gaps. Student achievement improved as demonstrated through several results of the SLC grant program including outperforming the state in reading grades 3-8 for the past two years as well as outperforming the state in math grades 8 and 11 for the past two years. The district's graduation rate for the past four years has been above the state average, including the identified subpopulations. The number of students enrolling college has increased overall as well as in the identified subpopulations.</p> <p>Graduation rates are being increased at the alternative high school through the personalization of studies and making flexible use of time.</p> <p>The applicant does not identify which schools were persistently low-achieving or low-performing, so it is not possible to determine if reforms were ambitious or significant.</p> <p>The applicant has not identified specific strategies that have been implemented to make student performance data available to students, educators, and parents in order to improve instruction and services.</p> <p>Based on the information and level of detail included, this applicant minimally addresses the elements of this set of criteria.</p>		
<b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>

**(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant lists much of their financial information on the district website. Information listed includes instructional positions with a combined salary and benefits package over \$100,000 as well as the instructional staff's union contract which outlines the salary lanes and benefits provided to instructional staff.

Non-personnel expenditures are addressed in the mission based budgeting process conducted by the building principal. The proposal states that this information may be shared with staff and community members as part of the process.

The applicant does not indicate how teacher salaries are made public.

The applicant does not indicate how support staff salaries are made public.

Based on the amount of information provided to support the elements of this criteria and the information not included, this application moderately demonstrates a high level of transparency.

**(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)****10****10****(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant has successfully requested and received personal curriculum waivers and seat-time waivers so that they are able to provide online and blended instruction in order to better meet the needs of their students through personalized learning environments.

The Instructional Rounds approach that the district has adopted to continuously improve its schools creates conditions necessary for the schools to be successful at implementing the personalized learning environments described in the proposal.

The Critical Friend Group process implemented at the high school has proven successful and has expanded to the middle schools. This demonstrates the district's support for processes that will help improve instruction and learning. As an extension, the district is likely to show continued support for the implementation of the personalized learning environments described in the proposal.

The applicant thoroughly demonstrates evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy to implement the personalized learning environments described in the proposal.

**(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)****10****4****(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant states that all teachers and administrators in all 19 schools had the opportunity to participate in a Personalizing Education Inventory. The results were used to inform the school improvement and grand planning.

The applicant does not provide results from any stakeholder input sessions that took place for the Race to the Top program. All results included in the proposal are for other projects that the district has implemented. The applicant states that a similar process was used, but no results were included to support this claim.

In addition, it is not clear exactly how the proposal was revised based on stakeholder engagement and feedback.

No indication is given that student input was considered in the development of the proposal.

The applicant does not state if they have collective bargaining representation in their LEA. No evidence is provided that the proposed program has the required support.

The applicant included letters of support from the Michigan Department of Education, the mayor of the city of Traverse, the Executive Director of the local chapter of Big Brothers Big Sisters, the city manager of the city of Traverse, President of Northwestern Michigan college, Superintendent of the Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District, the Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Tribal Chairman of the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians. The applicant has support from many different areas of the community.



No letters of support are included from parents or parent groups. It raises some concern about the involvement and commitment of parents in the proposed program.

<b>(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
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**(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant identifies needs and gaps that the plan will be addressed in the proposed program based on unmet objectives from the Smaller Learning Communities grant that was recently completed in the district. Other goals are listed for increasing student achievement. However, the goals are not measurable.

The LEA did not demonstrate evidence of a high quality plan for the analysis of the applicant's current status in implementing personalized learning environments. The applicant lists goals, but does not list activities, timelines, deliverables, or responsible parties.

### C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>12</b>

**(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

(a)

High school students currently engage in a student-led conference, present learning portfolios, and authentic assessments to demonstrate understanding of their learning and goal accomplishment.

Students at each grade level will develop learning goals targeting their post-secondary plans; engage in substantive conversations with their peers, teachers, and parents; and make connections beyond the classroom. These activities will help students recognize that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals.

Parents are involved in pathway selection and can access the online grade book. While these are good practices, they do not adequately demonstrate parental involvement as a part of improving student achievement.

The applicant intends to implement a process at each grade level whereby students will write learning goals connected to college- and career-readiness standards, graduation requirements, and 21st Century Skills. These learning goals will act as an anchor component in student-created electronic portfolios. The applicant does not indicate how progress will be measured.

A student-designed capstone experience will be implemented in grades 5, 8, and 12 to enable students to be involved in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest.

Students will have access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning through world language opportunities as well as international exchanges. Technology will be used to build relationships with partner schools for students who cannot participate in the international exchanges.

The applicant indicates they will provide research-based professional development in order to improve instruction to develop students' abilities to master critical academic content. However, the applicant does not provide details about the content of this professional development.

The applicant does not address how the district will develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving as a part of the proposed program.

The plan included in the proposal provides a good starting point for the development of a high-quality plan. All grade levels are addressed in the goals and activities. The activities listed in the plan are related to the corresponding goals. However, the goals listed in the plan are not quantified. The timeline for implementation is vague. It does not give a detailed picture of how the program will be implemented throughout the district across four years. For example, professional development and training comprises a large portion of the proposed program, but no schedule is provided as to when that training will occur beyond an assigned year. More detail is needed for this to be considered a high-quality plan. In addition, it is not

clear how some of the deliverables demonstrate achievement of the listed goal. For example, the applicant indicates that "personalized learning experience will require students to demonstrate competencies" supports the goal that "all students will be provided multiple opportunities to engage in rich, deep learning experiences." It is not clear how this deliverable will show achievement of the goal to which it is linked in the table. While a list of responsible parties is indicated corresponding to each goal listed in the plan, the applicant does not provide adequate detail about who the responsible party is for each of the deliverables included in the plan. Listing everyone involved in the process does not identify the individual ultimately responsible for ensuring that the deliverable is completed in a timely manner and as described in the proposed plan.

(b)

Each student will develop learning goals targeting their post-secondary plans. By using this as a guide for academic development, students will be able to follow a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development designed to enable the student to achieve his or her individual learning goals. The level of involvement from instructional staff will help ensure that students will graduate on time and college- and career-ready.

The proposed program includes several proven and research-based strategies to improve instruction. In addition, the district has several different learning environments that have been implemented in order to improve student achievement and personalized learning. These include online learning and blended learning in addition to classroom learning.

21st Century Skills will be used to provide quality content to students as all grade levels.

The applicant does not describe parental support as a part of the strategies to be implemented in the proposed program.

The applicant indicates feedback will be gathered annually. While this is ongoing and regular, this is not frequently updating individual student data so that it can be used to determine progress toward mastery of college- and career-ready standards.

The applicant indicates that instruction will be differentiated based on student needs. However, because feedback is only gathered annually, differentiation of instruction may not be based on the student's current knowledge and skills.

The applicant does not provide any examples of specific accommodations and/or high-quality strategies that will be implemented for high-need students to help ensure they are on track toward meeting college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements. The strategies listed in the proposed program are likely to help the high-need students, but no accommodation have been identified specifically for that group of students.

No details are provided about the mechanisms that will be put in place to provide training and support to students that will ensure they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning. The applicant lists "Instruct students on how to use tools available to them." as an activity. There are no details provided about who is responsible for the instruction or the qualifications of the individual(s) providing instruction. It is not clear which tools which students will receive instruction on or when.

<b>(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>
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**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

A Continuous Improvement Leadership team will be formed to help expand the concept of developing personalized educational development plans. The secondary teams who have already implemented strategies outlined in the proposed program will deepen their facilitation and coaching skills to support others.

The applicant states that "All teachers at all grade levels will receive training based on their understanding of the authentic instruction continuum in order to develop best practices." However, the lack of detail regarding the structure and format of that training does not demonstrate that the applicant a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching. No schedule is provided for how or when all teachers in the district will receive this training. The format (classroom, online, large group, small group, individual) of the training is not specified so the logistics of all teachers receiving the training are not clear.

All assessments listed are annual. This does not allow instructional staff to frequently measure student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements. Annual data collection makes it challenging to use data to inform both the acceleration of student progress and the improvement of the individual

and collective practice of educators. In addition more detail is needed about how specifically these assessments are used to adapt teaching and learning.

Administrators will participate in collaborative trainings in authentic assessment of staff members. While this will help provide constructive feedback to the teachers, no schedule is provided regarding the frequency with which the evaluations will occur or what sorts of supports or interventions will be provided based on recommendations stemming from evaluations. The teacher-mentoring program is mentioned, but no details are provided about how that program works or its effectiveness in improving instruction.

The applicant states that each administrator will be held responsible for building growth. However, no specifics are provided about the principal evaluation system that will be used as a part of the proposed program, the frequency with which it will be used, of the supports and interventions that will be in place if improvement is needed.

The applicant intends to use the resources currently available to help teachers create individualized student profiles. The profiles will allow teachers to create authentic tasks, activities, and assessments to allow for differentiated student interests and needs. Teachers will have support via Critical Friend Groups to analyze data.

Using Rubicon Atlas, teachers can search by standard to find available, aligned, digital resources. The proposed program would expand access to all teachers by the end of the grant. In addition all teachers would have received training on the tool by the end of the grant.

Annual assessments are used to measure student performance. These assessments do not provide feedback about any of the specific resources being implemented as a part of the proposed program. It will be difficult to determine which resources have been valuable for which students so as to be better able to match student needs with specific resources and approaches.

The district teacher evaluation system has several components that provide information about educator effectiveness. Surveys are administered to evaluate school climate. Instructional Rounds provides data based on school determined problems of practice. This system of evaluation will be expanded to include all building K-12 within the district. This will enable the applicant to assess individual and collective educational effectiveness and school culture and climate. In addition personnel have (or will have by the end of the grant) received training on these components so that practices can be improved as a part of increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps.

The applicant states that they "will provide an ongoing month-to-month systemic system of professional development that supports district goals of all teachers becoming master teachers". However, no additional details are provided about the training(s) that will occur, who will attend each training, who will provide the training(s). The applicant does not indicate if professional development will be provided that focuses on high-needs students, low-performing subjects, specialty areas. Stating that all teachers across the district will be provided the same intensive training is not a high-quality plan. It does not contain goals, specific activities, a detailed timeline, identified deliverables, or responsible parties.

#### D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
The applicant states that the TCAPS Central Office supports schools moving towards greater autonomy and has provided leadership and coordination for two previous grant awards. However a governance structure for the proposed project is not described in the application. It is not clear who is in charge of the grant or grant funds. It is not indicated who will be responsible for identifying if all components of the proposed program are being implemented with fidelity and according to schedule.		

The applicant intends to hire a Director of Improvement/Research/Evaluation as well as core content area Instructional Leaders. However it is not clear how these positions fit into the structure of the district or of the governance of the proposed program.

Leadership teams will be in place as a part of the proposed program. Teams have sufficient flexibility and autonomy over school personnel decisions and school-level budgets. The teams work with the principal to decide the distribution of positions and resources to suit the needs of the building's instructional program.

Students in TCAPS have the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic. Students at the secondary level can test out of any class by passing the exit exam. Middle school students can receive high school credit in several subject areas. Students 6-12 are eligible to complete online coursework that allows them to work at their own pace. Options are not currently available for elementary students. No options for elementary students are part of the proposed program.

The applicant does not present much support for the criterion that students have the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways. High school students demonstrate mastery through presenting portfolios of their work in student-led conferences. It is not clear how often this occurs. Specific methods of evaluating elementary and middle schools students are not fully explained. Sufficient detail regarding the frequency of assessment is not provided which makes it difficult to determine if students are given the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times. The applicant does not address how students are given multiple comparable ways to demonstrate mastery of standards.

No learning resources or are identified that are specifically targeted at students with disabilities or English learners. The applicant states that targeted support will be outlined in each student's Individualized Learning plan, but does not give examples of the types of support available. The applicant also states that the district provides translation services as necessary and systems such as Moodle and Google Docs have language settings to assist those who are English learners. While those systems do have language settings, that is not a resource developed specifically for English learners that would better help close the achievement gap.

**(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)**

**10**

**3**

**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

No information is provided about accommodating parents, or other stakeholders, who are English learners. The applicant does not describe accommodations that will be made to ensure that non-English speakers have the resources needed to access necessary content, tools, and other learning resources both in and out of school to support the implementation of the applicant's proposal.

The high school currently has a one-to-one laptop program. The proposed project would expand that to other grade levels in order to increase access to necessary tools and other learning resources. A detailed timeline for this expansion is not presented in the application. There is also no specification as to whom the responsible party would be for ensuring the distribution of the laptops occurs on time and within budget.

The applicant states that "TCAPS is committed to providing online materials and instructional supports for every content area and grade level throughout the duration of the grant and beyond". However, a high-quality plan describing the details of this commitment is not included in the application.

TCAPS provides technical support to all staff and students. Online tutorial sites are available for all technologies and systems within the district. The proposed program would expand the student technician program creating a help desk. It would also include the continuous updating of video and written tutorials available for self-service support. The applicant does not address how support is provided for parents and other stakeholders.

Parents and students currently have access to grades, transcripts, attendance, and assignments through Pinnacle Internet Viewer. All student work done on TCAPS systems or within Google Docs is available for students to access or download at any time. The applicant does not specify what the TCAPS systems are or what data can be downloaded from them or how that data could be used in other electronic learning systems.

The applicant states that all of TCAPS various data systems allow for interoperability. However, no specifics are provided as to what these systems are or how they can be used together to support project implementation.

## E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b> <p>The District School Improvement Team (DSIT) meets regularly every other month to discuss school improvement issues, progress, and future innovations. Members of the DSIT then share information at the individual school level and with parent organizations. The applicant does not indicate what measures the DSIT uses to assess and evaluate progress toward project goals or to identify opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements.</p> <p>Principals meet bi-weekly with central office staff to discuss all aspects of the district office toward the strategic plan. The principals then communicate this information to teachers at the individual sites. No details are provided about the measures used to assess and evaluate progress toward project goals or to identify opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements.</p> <p>The applicant identifies ways that the proposed program will monitor and publicly share information. However, how the quality of investments will be measured is not described in sufficient detail. Based on the level of detail included in the application for this criteria, the applicant demonstrates to a moderate extent a strategy for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process.</p>		
<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b> <p>An annual data fair will be held to publicly revisit the progress of the RTT-D initiative.</p> <p>Regularly scheduled Board of Education meetings and committee meetings are open to the public and are televised on a local television station.</p> <p>School newsletters are sent home at regular intervals.</p> <p>School administrators, staff, and the district superintendent meet regularly with parent and community organizations to provide information regarding curriculum, initiatives, student performance, and staffing.</p> <p>Students actively communicate throughout the district via student-led broadcasts and publications.</p> <p>The applicant has fully described its approach to continuously improve its plan through strategies for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders.</p>		
<b>(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b> <p>The applicant includes a sufficient number of performance measures - 12.</p> <p>Each of the the required and applicant-proposed performance measures based on an applicant's applicable population are addressed.</p> <p>All Applicants - a, b</p> <p>The applicant states that this measure was selected pursuant to grant requirement, but does not specify what instrument or data was/will be used to obtain the results listed in the tables. The applicant states that this measure will provide data to support success of the district's professional development initiatives. However, the applicant does not indicate which</p>		

components of the proposed program inform the results of this measure or what actions will be taken to modify the plan if projected targets are not achieved. No details are provided about who will review the results of the measurement or how modifications will be identified or implemented. The targets for these performance measures, both overall and for identified subgroups, seem ambitious yet achievable.

#### All Applicants - c

The applicant states that absence data was selected for as a performance measure since attendance is related to student achievement. No interventions for improving attendance were described in the proposed program. It is not clear what the correlation is between improved attendance and project success. Increased student attendance would likely lead to better student achievement regardless of the program implemented. The applicant states that student absence data will be continuously monitored, but does not define how often continuously is or who will be reviewing the data. In addition the applicant indicates that there will be a periodic review of overall district attendance data. Responsible parties are not identified. Annual targets are not included for identified subgroups. It is not possible to determine if the targets for this performance measure are achievable because strategies for increased attendance have not been clearly identified.

#### Grades PreK-3 - a, b

The applicant selected running records, CAAP, and MEAP because they are considered reliable measures of student achievement. Data will be used to personalize program for individual student's increased achievement, determine the effectiveness of curriculum district wide, and improve achievement gaps. While the applicant indicates that data will be reviewed over time, no specifics are given in terms of responsible parties for review of the data or of implementing changes that need to occur as a result of the data. The targets for these performance measures, both overall and for identified subgroups, seem ambitious yet achievable.

#### Grades 4-8 - a

The applicant selected MEAP, NWEA, MAP, and EXPLORE because they are considered reliable measures of student achievement and college-career readiness. Data will be used to personalize program for individual student's increased achievement, determine the effectiveness of curriculum district wide, and improve achievement gaps. While the applicant indicates that data will be reviewed over time, no specifics are given in terms of responsible parties for review of the data or of implementing changes that need to occur as a result of the data. The targets for this performance measure, both overall and for identified subgroups, seem ambitious yet achievable.

#### Grades 4-8 - b, c

The applicant selected MEAP, NWEA, MAP, and EXPLORE because they are considered reliable measures of student achievement and college-career readiness. Data will be used to personalize program for individual student's increased achievement, determine the effectiveness of curriculum district wide, and improve achievement gaps. Multiple measures of individual student success improve the teacher's ability to identify needs and guide instruction. Individual student scores can be studied longitudinally for growth. While the applicant indicates that data will be reviewed over time, no specifics are given in terms of responsible parties for review of the data or of implementing changes that need to occur as a result of the data. The targets for these performance measures, both overall and for identified subgroups, seem ambitious yet achievable.

#### Grades 9-12 - a

The applicant states that this measure was selected pursuant to grant requirement. The applicant states that the measurement will provide data to help understand challenges of population served and identify funding sources. However, the applicant does not explain how FAFSA provides data about challenges of the population served nor about how it will

be used to identify funding sources. The applicant states that if target goals are not met, more rigorous promotions to families will be engaged. However, no responsible parties are identified for reviewing data or for implementing the unidentified promotions. Annual targets are not included for identified subgroups. The targets provided for these performance measures seem ambitious yet achievable.

Grades 9-12 - b, c

The applicant selected EXPLORE, PLAN, ACT, MME, and the graduation rate because they are considered reliable measures of student achievement and college-career readiness. Data will be used to personalize program for individual student's increased achievement, determine the effectiveness of curriculum district wide, and improve achievement gaps. Multiple measures of individual student success improve the teacher's ability to identify needs and guide instruction. Individual student scores can be studied longitudinally for growth. The counselors are responsible for monitoring student progress. However, no responsible party is identified for implementing changes that may need to occur as a result of the data. The targets for these performance measures, both overall and for identified subgroups, seem ambitious yet achievable.

Grades 9-12 - d, e

The applicant selected EXPLORE, PLAN, ACT, MME, Advanced Placement exams, and Coalition of Essential Schools (CES) Asset Survey because they are considered reliable measures of student achievement, social/emotional health, and college- and career- readiness. Data will be used to personalize program for individual student's increased achievement, determine the effectiveness of curriculum district wide, and improve achievement gaps. Multiple measures of individual student success improve the teacher's ability to identify needs and guide instruction. Individual student scores can be studied longitudinally for growth. While the applicant indicates that data will be reviewed over time, no specifics are given in terms of responsible parties for review of the data or of implementing changes that need to occur as a result of the data. The targets for these performance measures, both overall and for identified subgroups, seem ambitious yet achievable.

While performance measures are listed, details for how the measures will provide rigorous, timely, and formative information and how the program will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress is only moderately addressed.

**(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)**

**5**

**3**

**(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

TCAPS evaluation activities will examine the costs and outcomes of intervention and improvement strategies. Results will be presented as cost-effectiveness ratios.

Investments in professional development will be monitored by the Directors of Professional Development and Improvement/Research/Evaluation ad DSIT through data collected from the Instructional Rounds process and student achievement data.

The applicant indicates that continuous improvement process will assist TCAPS in identifying variables that may represent waste and enable stakeholders to identify potential solutions to address any less than satisfactory outcomes. No standards are provided for how "waste" will be determined or what qualifies as less than satisfactory.

"Cycles of evaluation will be kept to a reasonable amount of time to allow for the impact of professional development to truly be measured." The applicant does not specify the frequency with which the cycles of evaluation will be started or how the results of the evaluation will impact the plan.

While the applicant lists some strategies that will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed program, not enough detail is provided about the frequency or methods that will be used. The applicant demonstrates to a moderate degree how well the proposed program will evaluate the effectiveness of investments.



**F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>
<p><b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant provides an outline for how all Race to the Top - District grant funds will be spent. No specific outside funding sources are included in the proposed budget.</p> <p>It is difficult to determine if the budget is reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the proposal because a high-quality plan including sufficient detail for implementation is not included in the application.</p> <p>Salaries and expenditures on fringe benefits do not increase across the final three years of the grant. This does not seem realistic since increases in salary and the cost of benefits are likely to occur.</p> <p>The applicant describes how funds will be used to support the development and implementation of the proposal. A brief rationale is included for each project in the proposed program.</p> <p>The applicant does not clearly distinguish between funds that will be used for one-time investments versus those that will be used for ongoing operational costs.</p> <p>The professional development programs proposed could ensure the long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments. The applicant does not indicate where financial support will come from to sustain the proposed program after the term of the grant.</p>		
<b>(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Several examples are provided which are relevant to the sustainability of project goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training of in-house coaching will build capacity of the staff. The district is also building capacity through hosting mini-institutes for the continuous improvement strategy, Instructional Rounds.</li> <li>• DSIT will continue beyond the term of the grant.</li> <li>• The application include letters of support from State and local government leaders.</li> </ul> <p>Incomplete information is included in regard to some elements of the criteria.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant indicates that once structures are in place for the proposed projects, the district will be able to continue and sustain the projects. However, adequate information is not provided to support these assertions.</li> <li>• The applicant states that "other available federal, state, and, local funding will be used to sustain the RTTT projects at each school". This does not adequately address funding related to sustainability beyond the term of the grant.</li> <li>• The applicant mentions that the proposal has the potential for dissemination and replication. No details are provided about how this could occur. No information is included in the project plan regarding replication in other schools or districts.</li> </ul> <p>In summary, the proposed project does not include a high-quality plan for sustainability. The applicant does not include goals directly related to sustainability, a timeline for completion of activities related to the achievement of these goals, deliverables, or parties responsible for the execution of activities directly related to sustainability.</p>		

**Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>

**Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant will partner with community partners to create a comprehensive early childhood program. The sustainability of this partnership and project are not adequately addressed in the proposal.

The applicant identified six desired results that align with and support the broader proposal. The results include educational results, other education outcomes, and family and community supports.

The applicant lists data that will be gathered for each results for each participating student. Details are not provided about how the data will be collected, compiled, shared, or analyzed as a part of the proposed project. No information is provided about who the responsible parties will be for conducting these activities.

Data will be reviewed annually to identify children who need interventions. A written transition plan will be developed that will include strategies to meet the growth needs of each student. No details are provided about who will develop the transition plan or what the possible intervention strategies will include. The applicant also does not indicate why assessments of participants are not reviewed more often in order to more quickly develop personalized learning for the participating students. If the intent of the project is to develop kindergarten ready students, data reviews will need to occur more often than annually in order to fulfill that intent. The project as proposed does not place special emphasis on students facing significant challenges, such as students with disabilities, English learners, and students affected by poverty (including highly mobile students), family instability, or other child welfare.

The applicant states that the Early Childhood model will be extended through many actions. Home visitations will continue through kindergarten. It is not clear if this is for all students. Preschool services will be extended to "the highest as-risk three-year-old children". No details are provided as to how these children will be identified or what qualifies them as the highest at-risk. In addition, a clear timeline for the expansion of these services is not adequately described.

The applicant does not describe how the program would improve results over time. Desired results are listed, but the applicant does not describe how the proposed project would lead to achievement of the results or how/why those results would improve.

The partnership would give parents access to a parent education center. Instructors would receive instruction regarding behavioral intervention. No clear connection is made between the partnership and the integration of education and other services for participating students.

The applicant does not describe how the proposed project would build the capacity of the staff by providing them with tools and supports to assess the needs and assets of participating students that are aligned with the partnership's goals for improving the education and family and community supports identified by the partnership. The application does not address the goals of the partnership or how those goals align with the needs and assets of the participating students.

Community needs and assets have not been identified so it is not possible to determine how they can align with the goals for improving education and family and community supports. PLCs will be implemented at the early childhood level which arguably supports the improvement of education (no data is provided by the applicant). Goals for improving family and community supports are not addressed.

The applicant states that varied and frequent methods of identifying school and community needs and assets will be used. Not enough detail is provided to evaluate if the proposed project will successfully identify those needs or how those align with the goals for improving the education and family and community supports identified by the applicant. The applicant does not address how the proposed project would build capacity of staff by providing them with tools and supports to identify and inventory needs.

The applicant does not adequately describe how the partnership and LEA would build the capacity of staff in participating schools by providing them with tools and supports to create a decision-making process and infrastructure to select, implement, and evaluate supports that address the individual needs of participating students and support improved results. The applicant states that they will practice a continuous cycle of improvement but does not provide details as to how that will be implemented in the proposed early childhood project.

The applicant describes plans to include parents of participating students in components designed to address student, family, and school needs. The applicant does not address parent or family engagement in decision-making about solution to improve results over time.

TCAPS and its partners will regularly use the cycle of continuous improvement to monitor progress. (No specific times are included to define frequently.) Program data will be presented in the annual Improvement Showcase. The proposal does not address how the proposed project will build capacity of the staff through tools and supports for routine assessment, implementing the plan to maximum impact, or resolving challenges and problems.

The proposal identifies annual ambitious yet achievable performance measures for the proposed population-level and describe desired results for students.

### Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>	<b>Met/Not Met</b>	<b>Met</b>
<b>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</b> The applicant described their vision and plan for personalized learning environments to a moderate degree. The applicant's plan addresses the core assurance areas. Evidence was provided to support how the proposed program would improve learning and teaching. Strategies for accelerating student achievement were addressed. The goals of the plan target expanding student access to effective educators and preparing students for college and careers.		
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>126</b>

### Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	5
<b>Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:</b> The applicant proposes to integrate Authentic Intellectual Work into all content taught in the participating schools. Administration and teachers will receive professional development to help them develop the necessary skills.  The applicant provides an outline of how the program will be implemented across four years. This outline is not a high-quality plan because it does not include quantitatively measurable goals, descriptions of specific activities, a detailed timeline of events, associated deliverables, or responsible parties. There is no description of how the two participating districts will work together to be successful in the development and/or implementation of this program.  The proposed budget does not allow for increases in salary during the four funding years. A detailed explanation is not provided as to the specific materials that will be purchased or how those materials support the proposed project. The justification for the online learning listed in the budget is not adequately explained. Not enough information is provided to determine how that expense will support the proposed project.  The applicant addresses the criteria for the Optional Budget Supplement to a minimal extent. Insufficient detail was provided to explain how the materials and activities listed would be implemented as part of the proposed project.		
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	5
<b>Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:</b>		

The applicant does not fully develop a rationale for the specific area they will address with this initiative. The applicant is addressing Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM) in hopes of increasing STEM skills and interest in STEM careers.

TCPS will collaborate with another local school district for the proposed project. A brief outline of desired results is included in the application, however not enough detail is included to be a high-quality plan. The applicant does not include activities, deliverables, a detailed timeline, individuals responsible for each activity. In addition, the applicant does not address how the two districts will work together to develop and/or implement the proposed project. Adequate detail is not provided about how the schools will work with the mentors and partners or who those mentors/partners will be.

The application includes budget information for the project. However not enough detail is provided to fully meet this criterion. Objectives are not identified. The design of the proposed project is not clear. The significance of the project activities is not fully explained. The number of students to be served by the activities is not specified. Therefore, it is not possible to evaluate the adequacy or reasonableness of the proposed budget in relation to these elements.

The applicant minimally addresses the criteria for the optional budget supplement initiative. All areas are touched upon, but more detail is needed.

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	6
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**Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant wants to transition from printed curriculum to digital curriculum in order to

- make resources more available to teachers and students
- allow teachers to support each other in the development of personalized learning for their students
- create a data system to evaluate the use and effectiveness of online content modules and resources.

The transition to digital content would be at the secondary level and the elementary level. All content areas would be included.

Four Digital Curriculum Specialists will be hired to work with content area teachers to assemble and create the necessary digital curriculum to service the entire K-12 population.

A brief description of intended activities is included in the application and is separated by year, however not enough detail is included. A high-quality plan for this project would include specific, measurable goals; activities that strongly support the goals; deliverables correlated to the activities and goals; a detailed timeline indicating how the project activities will be implemented; parties responsible for each activity. In addition, the applicant does not address how the two districts will work together to develop and/or implement the proposed project. Adequate detail is not provided about how the schools will divide the time of the Digital Curriculum Specialists.

It is not possible to evaluate the adequacy or reasonableness of the proposed budget in relation to the objectives, design, and significance of the proposed project activities and the number of students to be served. Objectives are not identified. The significance of the project activities is not fully explained. The number of students to be served by the activities is not specified.

While all criteria for the optional budget supplement initiative are mentioned in the application, the level of detail provided only addresses the criteria to a minimal extent.



## Race to the Top - District



## Technical Review Form

### Application #0229MI-3 for Traverse City Area Public Schools

#### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<p><b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant has described a coherent vision of reform, based on its past success with the Smaller Learning Communities grant. It will use lessons learned to deepen student learning through the use of personal learning plans, and just-in time interventions. This vision is comprehensive in that it builds on the success enjoyed by high schools and expands the work to grades PK-8. The three layers of vision (personalization for students, professional development for teachers, and improvement of district system) shows that the applicant has thoughtfully considered a variety of factors that will need to be impacted by the reform. Equity will be increased as learning gaps of students with high needs will be monitored and addressed by teachers trained in Critical Friends Group and Instructional Rounds techniques. The applicant speaks to the acceleration of student learning by the use of technology such as Rubicon Atlas.</p> <p>Because the applicant sets forth a vision that is coherent and comprehensive and clearly articulates each objective of reform, this criterion is scored high.</p>		
<b>(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<p><b>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant includes all district schools in the plan. Table A.2 lists the schools along with their demographic information. This totals about ten thousand students, forty-two percent of whom are economically disadvantaged, as well as 567 teachers. The LEA meets the minimum requirements of the grant.</p> <p>The applicant notes that it has chosen to have all schools in the district participate based on its participation in the Smaller Learning Communities grant. A compelling description of the lessons learned from the SLC grant is in section B1.</p> <p>Because the applicant meets all of the requirements of this criterion, it is scored in the high range.</p>		
<b>(A)(3) LEA-wide reform &amp; change (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
<p><b>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant explains how the Instructional Rounds Process that is currently in practice will support district-wide change due to the grant by focused, thoughtful action. Several campuses have already utilized this IRP with success. The applicant does not anticipate scale up beyond the district level.</p> <p>The applicant has provided a logic model in Appendix A 5, which illustrates how resources, inputs, and activities lead to results of the grant proposal.</p> <p>No timelines for scale-up are given for the project .</p> <p>Because the applicant provides evidence for some of the components of a high quality plan, this area is ranked medium.</p>		
<b>(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
<p><b>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant provides baselines and annual goals on summative assessments in mathematics and reading for grades kindergarten-grade 12, including state tests, PLAN, EXPLORE, ACT and Advanced Placement. Baselines are given for all students as well as economically disadvantaged and special education students. Also provided are goals to close achievement gaps over several years, which are ambitious, yet achievable.</p>		

The applicant includes a table on high school graduation goals and college enrollment, for all students, economically disadvantaged and special education students. The goals reach 100 percent for 2016-17, which are ambitious but since some groups are as low as 34%, these goals are unlikely to be achieved in a period of less than ten years. No explanation is provided in the methodology section demonstrating that these goals are achievable. No evidence is given that the goals are equal to or exceed the state targets, but they reach 100 percent .

Included in the proposal are aspirations of postsecondary degree attainment, as provided by the National Clearing House.

Because the applicant has addressed each of these sections of the criterion with ambitious goals, but fails to provide evidence that all of its goals are achievable, this criterion was ranked medium.

## B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b> <p>The applicant provides evidence in the narrative as well as tables and charts that it has a clear record of success for the past four years including several national awards.</p> <p>The applicant notes that college enrollment and high school graduation have increased for all students as well as subgroups. An alternative high school has personalized studies so that students can graduate on time.</p> <p>The applicant has shown progress in increasing math and reading scores on the state assessment, ACT, and AP exams. Personal Learning Plans provide student performance data to students for student led conferences, improving participation and informing parents and teachers.</p> <p>No evidence is provided that the LEA has achieved significant reforms at a persistently low-achieving school.</p> <p>The applicant provides evidence for a strong record of success overall, but no evidence for reforms in its lowest performing schools, which results in this criterion ranking as medium.</p>		
<b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b> <p>The LEA posts its check register, union contract, and ten years of finance data on its district website. It does not post salary information by campus, but for the district as a whole. School budget information is made available to the public during the planning process. The union contract outlines salary ranges and benefits. Actual personnel salaries over \$100,000 are posted as well. The district exceeds all state requirements for transparency.</p> <p>Because the applicant does not post actual personnel salaries under \$100,000, and is limited to district level information, this criterion was marked in the medium range.</p>		
<b>(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b> <p>The LEA has begun work to personalize learning under the adopted Common Core Standards. The district has provided evidence of its success under current state regulatory conditions that it can improve instruction. It goes beyond state statutory requirements to use local common assessments, NWEA, CWRA, and ACT/Explore/Plan to inform student goals. The state has allowed autonomy by granting personal curriculum waivers and seat time waivers, which the district used to provide online instruction.</p>		

Because the LEA has provided evidence that it has sufficient autonomy and favorable conditions exist to implement personalized learning, this criterion was ranked high.

<b>(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
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**(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The proposal includes an extensive community survey in Appendix 19 that provides evidence that the proposal was based on community engagement and feedback. The study was conducted of community members, parents, students, and staff, which led to the creation of the strategic plan in Appendix A1. This was presented to at least three stakeholder groups—the TCAPS Tomorrow Committee, the District School Improvement Team, and the District Advisory Council. In all, input was provided by, and feedback was received from students, parents, teachers, principals, central office staff, board members, and community members.

The applicant provides letters of support from local and state representatives, a local institute of higher education, chamber of commerce, and area tribe. The application was signed by the local teacher union representative.

The applicant provides ample evidence of stakeholder engagement, and thus this area was ranked high.

<b>(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
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**(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant demonstrated the logic behind its needs analysis. It used the conclusions from a Smaller Learning Community grant to analyze its needs and unmet objectives, including analysis by objective, indicator, target, and result. Additional gaps were noted, such as academic achievement of economically disadvantaged students.

The plan includes all of the features of a high quality plan. Timelines and responsible parties associated with each of the goals related to needs and gaps are given in section C1a.

Because the applicant contains all of the portions of a high quality plan to address needs, this criterion was ranked high.

## C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>
<p><b>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant has produced a high quality plan with goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties that relate to students managing their own learning. However, there is no clear link between each deliverable and the person responsible. In addition, the reliance on substitutes to allow for teacher release time may impact student outcomes.</p> <p>The applicant bases its personalized learning plan on its experience with a Smaller Learning Communities grant, which it intends to expand for all students throughout the district. Students will increase their ownership of their learning by student-led conferences, learning portfolios, and authentic assessments. Through the conferences, setting their own learning targets, student exhibitions, and writing goals that are related to college and career readiness, students will engage in conversations with parents and teachers. Electronic portfolios will allow teachers and parents support students to reach personalized goals. A capstone experience will be planned in multiple grades so that more students experience deeper learning. A personal learning plan will link each student's current learning to college readiness.</p> <p>Personalized learning will allow students multiple pathways to demonstrate competencies. All students are exposed to diverse cultures through a world language or International Baccalaureate experience.</p> <p>The applicant has produced a high quality plan that uses technology for flexible scheduling, use of software to monitor student growth, and create a student-centered environment. Training is provided to students and staff in the use of this</p>		



technology. High need students will benefit from this technology as well, but will also participate in roundtables and data meetings to personalize progress.

The applicant has benefited from the results of the SLC grant, and has applied lessons learned from that process. Because of the high quality of the plan, and the quality of evidence provided that indicate this criterion was met, this area was marked high.

<b>(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>
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**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant has included the components of a high quality plan of faculty development, including goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties.

The applicant provides evidence that it will support personalized learning strategies through International Baccalaureate, STEM courses at the elementary level, Montessori and writing academies. Seat-time waivers and blended instruction will accelerate learning. Teachers will be trained in these strategies that allow for personalized learning. The LEA will use triangulation of data to measure student achievement. Student progress is measured by standardized tests, but will also include authentic instruments and allow for proficiency demonstrated in multiple pathways. The Instructional Rounds program will provide feedback, as will student surveys and teacher logs.

The evaluation of teachers and principals will incorporate student data as well as professional learning and participation in learning communities. However, it is not clear if this evaluation process is annual or if it is conducted more frequently.

All educators will be trained in the analysis of student data and the Newmann evaluation system. School surveys and teacher logs will measure school climate. Intensive training will occur so that every teacher and the principal in the district is highly effective, and participates in a Critical Friends Group, in addition to other professional development. The applicant provides evidence of a high quality plan to ensure that within four years, all students receive instruction from highly effective teachers and principals.

Teachers will use technology to create individual student profiles and access electronic resources so that students receive differentiated activities and authentic tasks related to college and career readiness. Evidence is provided that teachers receive training in non-traditional teaching in order to help high need students, including technology such as Navigator.

Because of the extensive professional development already in place, and the evidence for continued staff development, this area was ranked high.

**D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>

**(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The LEA provides autonomy to schools by distributing leadership, providing support through grants that focus on personalized learning such as Project Zero and SLC, and allowing professional learning community time. School leadership teams have broad discretion in governance, scheduling, staffing, and budgeting. Seat-time waivers, on-line learning, and exit exams are in place that allow students to progress based on mastery. The Smaller Learning Communities allow students to access learning and demonstrate mastery in multiple ways, including several pilot programs focusing on college and career readiness. Technology such as Moodle, SuccessNet, and OverDrive, is accessed as a learning resource to adapt to all students, including high need students.

As the applicant provides a variety of evidence that it has met this criterion, it is ranked high.

<b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b> <p>The LEA has provided digital access to students so that they can tap into learning resources at any time. High School students are provided a laptop, and this service will continue down to the elementary students in 2013-14. Internet service is provided at open laps at the elementary schools. Online tutoring is available for all of the technological systems in use in the district. The LEA plans to create a student technician help desk so that it empowers students to use technology.</p> <p>The applicant provides evidence that parents and students have electronic access to grades, attendance and assignments and can export this information.</p> <p>The LEA's software allow for interoperability so that students and educators can analyze information in a variety of ways.</p> <p>Because the applicant provides evidence of meeting each component of this criterion, this section is rated high.</p>		

## E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b> <p>The District School Improvement Team will drive the continuous improvement process. Using the Instructional Rounds process, the team addresses a problem systematically in a timely fashion, with regular feedback. In addition to the DSIT, school leadership and student leadership groups meet on a regular basis to help solve issues. The continuous improvement team will coordinate these different levels of activities by designing and implementing a comprehensive program evaluation model that address all outcomes and progress measures of the grant. Support for these teams will include professional development related to program evaluation. An outside evaluator will also perform assessments and evaluation support to the continuous improvement team. However, no performance measures that will be utilized by the evaluator are listed in the proposal.</p> <p>Progress of the RTT-D grant will be communicated to all stakeholders using board meetings, newsletters, and DSIT meetings.</p> <p>This continuous improvement practice will continue after the life of the grant.</p> <p>Because the applicant has provided evidence for the sections of this criterion, it has been ranked high.</p>		
<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b> <p>The applicant provides evidence that it will continue to communicate with internal and external stakeholders through board meetings, newsletters, and district webpages. Parent and community organizations will meet with district staff to discuss the initiatives. The continuous improvement team will also collaborate with its peers in other districts to share finds from the RTT-D grant process. In addition, there will be an annual data fair specific to the grant to publicly discuss the grant and revise action plans if needed.</p> <p>Because the applicant fully meets this criterion, it was scored in the high range.</p>		
<b>(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b>		

The applicant has provided evidence that it will monitor all students, economically disadvantages students, and special education students in reading and mathematics for grades kindergarten to 11. Section E3 indicates the number of students with highly effective teachers and principals, reaching 80% by 2016-17. The district has selected non-academic measures based on grade bands, giving the rationale, frequency of measure, and its review process for each measurement. College Readiness will be measured in multiple grades by EXPLORE, PLAN, National Merit, and Advanced Placement exams. All students will be monitored for absences at the individual level, and intermediate intervention will be used if necessary. Overall attendance will be analyzed as well.

Each student in grades prek-3 will be monitored for aerobic fitness. Students in grades 4-8 will also be measured in the areas of health, nutrition, drug abuse, and school attitudes. High school students will be measured additionally on graduate rates and FAFSA completion.

Because of the thoroughness of addressing each portion of this section and the quality of evidence provided, this criterion is ranked high.

<b>(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
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**(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant has provided a framework to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan, which will be measured in four ways.

The logic model provided in the application will give a framework for cost-analysis of the project. Results will be considered in terms of cost-effectiveness ratios, which will drive sustainability of gains beyond the life of the grant. The Instructional Round process as well as LEAN will be used to evaluate the activities. Professional development effectiveness will be evaluated by the District School Improvement Team using student achievement data. Investments in staff will be measured through the continuous improvement process.

No evidence is provided for the decision-making process in the framework. It is unclear which evaluation method will be used for an intervention that is related to two of the four parts (e.g. a math instructional coach may be considered under the category of staff or professional development).

Although the applicant provides for a plan to evaluate the project, it lacks a clear decision-making process, and is rated in the medium range.

## F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b> <p>The costs for the continuous leadership team, professional development, early childhood, community outreach, and evaluation are reasonable and sufficient to successfully complete the project.</p> <p>The applicant identifies the funds that are one-time investments, such as the evaluation of the project. Other funds focus on interventions such as the professional development that ensure sustainability. The LEA has a history of sustaining other grant-initiated reforms, such as Smaller Learning Communities.</p> <p>No funds other than Race to the Top-District grant monies will be used to support the project.</p> <p>Because the applicant has provided evidence of thoughtful rationale and sustainability of the project beyond the term of the grant, this area was scored high.</p>		
<b>(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>

**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant has a history of success in continuing reforms that were initiated by grant funds.

The applicant states that local funds will be used beyond the life of the grant to sustain the work, but no details of sources of these funds are given.

The applicant does not include timelines or responsible parties in its plan for sustainability. No letters of support from government leaders indicate financial support.

Because the applicant fails to provide evidence for a high quality plan, this criteria is marked medium.

**Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>

**Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant lists partner organizations which include educational, community, social services, and postsecondary institutions. This competitive preference is in the area of early childhood, where the LEA has two existing partners, ECIC and TBAISD.

No financial support in cash or in-kind from partners are included in the budget. The applicant has letters of support from partner organizations such as TBAISD in the application.

The applicant has listed six goals that relate to early childhood, academic readiness and family supports, and describes how it would track indicators related to these goals. Program evaluation will be conducted every year by the district improvement team to monitor and improve the interventions. Additional personalized attention will be given to children with critical intervention service needs, including additional home visits, through which parents will be engaged. These interventions will scale up to all students at kindergarten. The applicant will partner with TBAISD and others to train staff in behavioral intervention. The professional learning communities of staff formed in the partnership will assess the needs of students and community, implement and evaluate supports for these students, and use a cycle of continuous improvement to monitor progress.

Because of the evidence provided by the applicant that it has coherent and sustainable partnerships with local organizations, can track data and improve results over time, as well as build capacity of staff, this criterion was marked in the high range.

**Absolute Priority 1**

	Available	Score
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>	<b>Met/Not Met</b>	<b>Met</b>

**Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant provides ample evidence that it will improve teaching through professional development, which will focus on the personalization of learning for students. Technology will be used to deepen student learning and meet the individual needs of every student. Supports for teachers include the continuous improvement learning team and professional development components of the grant. The emphasis on data and monitoring will increase attendance, achievement, and

graduation rates. More students will have access to the most effective teachers and principals, who will help them graduate from high school prepared for college.

Because the the applicant has comprehensively addressed how it will create personalized learning environments reflective of this absolute priority, it has been scored as met.

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>179</b>
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### Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	15

#### Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The application includes three optional areas: Authentic Intellectual Work, digital curriculum, and STEM K-12. AIW addresses critical thinking skills and student perseverance. The applicant's rationale for working in the area of critical thinking is given and well-supported. Authentic Intellectual Work is related to the Common Core as well as the goal of deepening learning.

This optional section includes a description, goals, activities, timeline, responsible parties, and deliverables. The plan includes two LEAs, both of which provide personal learning plans and capstone experiences which would benefit from the AIW program. The costs appear reasonable in relation to the objectives of the project and the number of teachers served.

Because of its high quality plan, Authentic Intellectual Work was scored in the high range.

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	11
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#### Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The application includes three optional areas: Authentic Intellectual Work, digital curriculum, and STEM K-12. Digital curriculum is a project so that students can access materials online in multiple formats. The applicant's rationale for working in the area of digital curriculum is given and well-supported. Students and parents would be able to access current resources anywhere if they were more accessible.

This optional section includes a description, goals, activities, and a timeline. The plan includes two LEAs, both of which use a learning management system to host online content. The costs appear reasonable in relation to the objectives of the project ; however, no evidence is given for the number of teachers served.

Digital curriculum had some of the elements of a high quality plan, but it did not indicate the number of teachers to be served, which resulted in a score of medium

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	3
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#### Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The application includes three optional areas: Authentic Intellectual Work, digital curriculum, and STEM K-12. The STEM K-12 proposal includes initiating robotics leagues in area schools. The applicant's rationale for working in the area of robotics is given and well-supported, as the program has won awards, and enrollment is increasing.

This optional section includes a description, goals, activities, timeline and deliverables. The plan includes two LEAs, one of which provides robotics activities and classes to some of its students. No evidence is given for the number of students that will be served. The budget contains no funds for robotics equipment, which is not reasonable.

As STEM K-12 did not include an estimate of the number of students served, nor funds for robotic equipment, it was scored low.